

## The Pueblo Peoples 5.1.1 5.1.2

Four hundred years after the Hohokam moved to Arizona, a people called the Ancestral Pueblo began to build a rich culture in the high plateaus of the desert Southwest. “Ancestral” means relatives, or ancestors from the past. **Pueblo** is the Spanish word for “village.” The Spanish used the word pueblo to describe both the people and the type of home in which they lived. The Navajo called them the “Anasazi” which means “ancient enemy.”

### Dry Farming

Like the Hohokam, the Ancestral Pueblo planted corn, squash, and beans. However, most of the high desert plateaus were not suited to the use of canals for irrigation. This led the Ancestral Pueblo to develop a way of farming called **dry farming**.

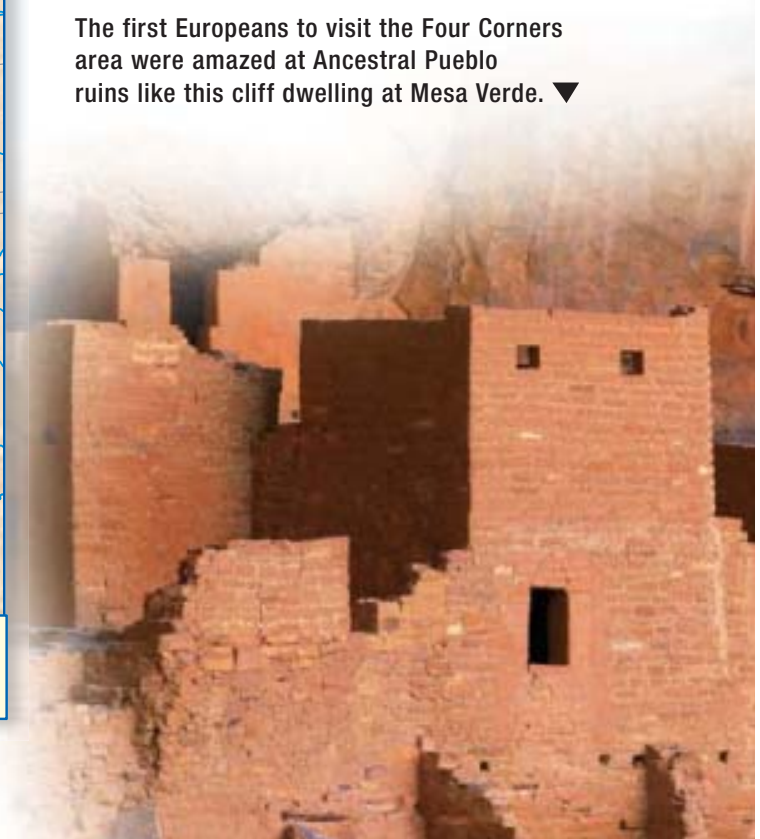
Dry farming is a way of growing crops in dry land. The Ancestral Pueblo channeled rainwater and snowmelt into catch basins. Then the water was slowly released into small, narrow pebble-lined drains to the plants. The Ancestral Pueblo became skilled dry farmers who were able to feed thousands of people.

### How the Ancestral Pueblo Lived

The Ancestral Pueblo lived in huge dwellings built along the steep sides of the cliffs. Ancestral Pueblo dwellings were made of finely carved stone and logs that were plastered with **adobe**. Adobe is a mixture of mud and straw. It dries to a hard clay that keeps a house cool during extreme heat and warm during bitter cold nights. Their dwellings were also placed to benefit from the winter sunlight.

Living in cliff dwellings, like those at Mesa Verde, made it easier for the Ancestral Pueblo to defend themselves against enemies. To make themselves

The first Europeans to visit the Four Corners area were amazed at Ancestral Pueblo ruins like this cliff dwelling at Mesa Verde. ▼



even safer, they built doorways that could be reached only with removable ladders. Ancestral Pueblo cliff dwellings had a special room called a **kiva**. The kiva is used for religious purposes. It is round and often sunken into the earth.

### City People

From the 700s through the 1300s, the Ancestral Pueblo flourished in the rocky cliffs, steep canyons, and high mesas of the Southwest. They lived in the area we know as the Four Corners. This is where the present-day states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah meet.

The Ancestral Pueblo culture included several cities, each home to hundreds of people. Many lived in buildings with hundreds of rooms. As their cities grew, so did their culture and art. Baskets and pottery were plentiful. Ancestral Pueblo traders followed well-traveled routes

throughout the Southwest, trading baskets and pottery for goods they did not have.

Ancestral Pueblo beliefs centered around the natural world. Historian John Upton Terrell said, “The [Ancestral Pueblo] see themselves as being woven into the . . . entire universe. They are . . . the winds, the stars, and the moon—everything that is born and lives and dies.”

### Chaco Canyon

At their strongest, the Ancestral Pueblo built in an area known as Chaco Canyon Pueblo Bonito. The largest of these dwellings had more than 650 rooms. Chaco Canyon was the center of a trading empire that used turquoise as money. American Indians traveled to Chaco Canyon for religious ceremonies and trade fairs along almost 400 miles of road.

